

RADIO TV REPORTS, II

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SUBJECT Clandestine Operations Around the World

TED KOPPEL: The U.S. intelligence community. Its main task is the collection and evaluation of information. But there is another, less visible side: clandestine operations. Under the Reagan Administration, they seem to be coming back into favor. We'll discuss that apparent trend tonight with four experts: former Deputy CIA Director Ray Cline; E. Howard Hunt, an intelligence officer for more than 20 years; Senator Joseph Biden, who's on the Senate Intelligence Committee; and former Senator Frank Church, who used to chair that committee.

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KOPPEL: Our focus tonight, what is sometimes referred to as covert activities or clandestine operations. It is that gray area, as it's been called, between diplomacy and combat, the means by which an Administration can act against its adversaries while maintaining deniability. It was, until the U.S. Senate began stripping away some of the classified wrapping paper, among the CIA's better-kept secrets. During the Carter Administration in particular, clandestine operations were reduced to a minimum. They seem to be on their way back into favor.

Again and again and again today at President Reagan's news conference, reporters gave the President the chance to deny what is customarily denied in public -- namely, even the suggestion that the U.S. Government would try to destabilize the government of another country by covert means. As White House correspondent Sam Donaldson reports, however, Mr. Reagan chose to rule out nothing.

SAM DONALDSON: President Reagan at his news conference today.

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